



Department of Justice

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TWO ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEYS FROM ATLANTA RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FROM DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Atlanta, GA - The United States Attorney's Office today announced two Assistant United States Attorneys from Atlanta have received prestigious awards from the Department of Justice in Washington D.C.

The Department of Justice held its 23rd annual Executive Office for United States Attorneys Director's Award Ceremony today, during which 154 award recipients were recognized for their excellence in law enforcement. Recipients included Assistant United States Attorneys, litigation and information technology support personnel, and others who have made outstanding contributions in federal, state and local law enforcement.

"We are honored to have the Justice Department recognize the extraordinary work done by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Gale McKenzie and Barbara Nelan in the McFarland and other mortgage fraud cases," said United States Attorney David E. Nahmias, while attending the ceremony in Washington. "With dedicated and skilled prosecutors like them, and our many partners in federal, state, and local law enforcement and regulatory agencies and community groups, we are achieving successes in attacking the mortgage fraud epidemic that has harmed so many citizens and neighborhoods in North Georgia."

Assistant United States Attorneys Barbara Nelan and Gale McKenzie received the award for their outstanding dedication in the prosecution of mortgage fraud in metropolitan Atlanta. Specifically named was the case of defendant Chalandra McFarland, which led to the convictions and jail sentences of 20 defendants, many of whom were professionals in the legal community and real estate and mortgage businesses, including a 30-year sentence for the closing attorney. This prosecution represented a major step in combating mortgage fraud in metropolitan Atlanta, which held the dubious distinction of being the nation's leader in mortgage fraud.

"Today's award recipients are honored for their extraordinary commitment to protecting our communities, promoting justice and preserving civil liberties that make our country so great," said Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. "It is through their

dedicated efforts and sacrifice that we are able to preserve justice for our communities, our nation and for future generations.”

While terrorism remains the top priority of the Department of Justice, the Department has continued its mission to enforce all of our Nation’s laws, including prosecuting civil rights violations, gang violence and drug crimes, as well as representing our client agencies, conducting civil enforcement, and assisting victims of crime. The efforts of Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nelan and McKenzie in prosecuting mortgage fraud cases have produced results as evidenced by recent reporting that Georgia has dropped in the national rankings in the incidence of mortgage fraud. Since the prosecution, Ms. McKenzie has continued to work tirelessly with Georgia state and local prosecutors, the State Bar’s Real Estate Section, the real estate industry, the mortgage industry, and community activists to address the mortgage fraud problem.

The Executive Office for United States Attorneys provides oversight, general executive assistance, and direction to the 94 United States Attorneys’ Offices around the country.

For further information, please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.